

WASHINGTON, DC—On April 23, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted in favor of H.R. 1145, the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act of 2009, which passed the House by a vote of 413 to 10. This bill directs the President to implement a program that would coordinate federal, state, local and tribal activities related to water, including: research, development, demonstration, data collection and dissemination, education, and technology transfer.

“I firmly believe in protecting our environment. The sustenance of our ecosystem, and by extension our quality of life, is dependant upon our vigilant and deliberate care,” said Congressman Sestak. “In my District, we know too well the consequences of overlooking our waterways. Our streams and watersheds are threatened and we suffer routinely from problems with storm water runoff and flooding. This bill is an important step in the ongoing process of managing, protecting, and restoring our waterways.”

HIGHLIGHTS OF H.R. 1145

- The bill would authorize \$2 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for each year of fiscal 2010-2012;
- establish an interagency committee charged with developing a National Water Availability Research and Assessment Plan that would coordinate all federal, state and local and tribal governments activities related to water;
- institute a plan based on recommendations from a 2007 report issued by the Subcommittee on Water Availability and Quality of the National Science and Technology Council and include current water programs and their funding levels;
- outline a series of water research outcomes to be reached by the committee, including:
 - Implementation of a national water census
 - Development of water monitoring techniques and technologies for enhancing water supply and reducing pollution
 - Identification of statutory or regulatory barriers to technologies and techniques related to water resource research
 - An assessment of the state of national and regional water quality, availability and use
 - Improved hydrologic prediction models
- The interagency committee also would be responsible for facilitating the transfer of technology and communication with non-governmental organizations.
- The measure would establish the National Water Initiative Coordination Office to provide technical assistance to the committee and to provide information to the public about the initiative.

Summary of H.R. 1145, the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act of 2009
National Water Research and Development Initiative Act of 2009 - (Sec. 2) Directs the President to: (1) implement a National Water Research and Development Initiative to improve the federal government's role in designing and implementing federal water research, development, demonstration, data collection and dissemination, education, and technology

transfer activities to address changes in U.S. water use, supply, and demand; and (2) establish or designate an interagency committee to implement the Initiative.

Requires the committee to: (1) develop a National Water Research and Assessment Plan in coordination with state, local, and tribal governments; (2) coordinate all water-related federal research, development, demonstration, data collection and dissemination, education, and technology transfer activities; (3) encourage cooperation among federal agencies and state, local, and tribal governments; (4) facilitate technology transfer, communication, and opportunities for information exchange with various parties through a National Water Initiative Coordination Office (to be established by the President to provide technical and administrative support to the committee); (5) provide guidance on outreach to encourage eligible minority serving institutions under the Higher Education Act of 1965 to apply for funding opportunities specified in the Plan; (6) encourage cooperation between federal agencies, state and local governments, and tribal governments to develop standard methods for collecting, managing, and disseminating data on water; and (7) require each agency that conducts water-related research or has authority over resources that affect water supply to identify the statutory or regulatory barriers preventing the use of any technology, technique, data collection method, or model that would contribute to greater availability of water resources in the United States through enhanced efficiency and conservation and to report at specified intervals to Congress.

Requires the Plan to: (1) establish priorities for federal water research; (2) identify each current program and activity related to the Initiative; (3) identify funding levels; (4) set forth a strategy and timeline to achieve specified desired outcomes, including implementation of a National Water Census, development of a new generation of water monitoring techniques, and analyses of the social, behavioral, and economic barriers to sustainable use of water resources in the United States; (5) address suggestions and incorporate public input; and (6) be submitted to Congress within one year.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.